KaroEcho Minutes: 10/8/2018

Present, KK6NDH HAL, K6KOP JERRY, KC6OBK MARIAN, KC2OKI JON, KI6KNP KEVIN, KK6GIO LARRY, KK6ZPM KAREN, KJ6WSS JAY, K6RJM ROB, KI6BEE HOWDY, KM6HFT CURT, KM6HBO JAMUEL, KM6CXI MIKE, KM6UCF NATALIE, NI6A, LARRY NAGLE. (16 members total)

Meeting was called to order at 19:30

Old Business:

Attention to the vacant Secretary position was again announced. No one was appointed to take minutes, and the minutes of the last meeting was not brought up for approval. The membership approved the published agenda.

The Constitution was amended as proposed with two abstaining (Marian and Jerry).

KK6NDH, Hal, discussed the need for fund raising. Several ideas (dues, donations, grants, special funds) were presented.

KK6GIO. Larry, reported on our 501.c.3 status. Larry will meet on Thursday with experts to pursue that status

Marian reported on the upcoming KCC remodel necessitated relocation of our traditional meeting site for perhaps a year. Various alternative sites were discussed such as Arlington Park club house, Marian and Jerry's house, Camp Hermes (Rob), Bldg E (Kensington Recreation), etc. Howdy, KE6BEE, indicated that he would look into a city co-sponsored fee-free site perhaps through the EC Parks and Recreation Director; which would allow free access for future meetings.

1/2 SET Critique: Oct 30, 2018 10 am – 12 noon

Don led, the ½ SET critique. A brief discussion on planning the SET regarding preplanning with prefabricated timed messages placed in envelopes that were destined to be opened at specific times during the SET would have been more efficient; but due to Don's absence that method will be attempted next SET. There is more practice needed in using the hybrid ARES/IC-213 message format and the form ICS-309 (when and how). Other than more training Don suggested that our main thrust should be recruitment of more operators. This is a chronic primary problem that needs to be addressed through an innovative reach-out strategy.

In summary, KE6BEE was NCS and did a marvelous job in handling all kinds of unexpected expectations. Stations were dispatched to KEN1 (KK6GIO), KEN2 (KK6GIO), KEN3 (KC6OBK), KEN5 (KJ6DYX), EC9 (KM6HBO), EC7 (KK6SRD), EC6 and EC5 (KJ6WSS and KK6ZPM), EC1 (NI6A), EC 10 and EC 11 were closed for repair. K6RJM was NCS for the GMRS/FRS Net, EC8 was not established. KJ6DJ and KK6UQX were stationed at the EOC, KM6UCF was message center manager at EC9, KM6UBZ, KK6NDH, and KM6CXI were involved with the CERT aspect at EC9. K6KOP acted as a high level relay station.

Lessons Identified:
Although **shadow work** was not tested point to point tactical comms (Mayor, IC, Public Works, City Manager, Asst. City manager, Shelter Managers, etc) is preferred over time consuming formal written traffic (form 213). Shadow work will be utilized during the next SET.

Resource nets, tactical, command nets, and logistic nets should operate on separate frequencies in times of heavy traffic loads. In light traffic times, it is best to handle all traffic with one net, albeit send stations off net frequency to pass traffic and then have them return to the net when done. This is a judgment call by the EC. The AEC, and/or the NCS in an ever changing moderate traffic situation.

There was an equipment failure at the surrogate EOC station on 146.415. Since no one could hear the EOC on 146.415 except the NCS, the net was severely slowed down because of the need for relays on net frequency.

Marian (KC6OBK) interjected stating the need to map out all of Ken/El Cerrito RF wise on 2m. Such would be a gigantic task just to map out each 17 CERT area staging area with each other, especially since not all CERT Area coordinators have published their CERT staging area locations. It is certain that HT rubber ducks to HT rubber ducks area to area (inter-area) comms will not work. To what extent will mobile and portable go-karts be necessary for reliable area to area comms. Relays or mobile units with gain mobile antennas to other mobiles with gain antennas due to the KE terrain most likely will be necessitated.

The responsibility for intra-area **frs/gmrs** comms was determined to be that of the CERT ACs to arrange. They must determine how they want to communicate with their blocks; however, KaroEcho has a model on how to do intra-area/block FRS/GMRS comms and is offering both training and frequency coordination to all CERT area teams. So far no CERT AC has taken KaroEcho up on its offer except EC9.

Then there was brief mention of GMRS CERT inter-area (area to area) and GMRS to the EOC comms. The possibility of installations of GMRS gain antennas at the EOC and at various CERT staging areas were briefly mentioned as well as the possibility of a GMRS repeater (See KM6CXI and K6RJM below).

Technical topics covered desening and adjacent frequency interference bleed-through interference (channel spacing). 15 KHz spacing is not adequate when we use 25 KHz wide FM signals (12.5 KHz on each side). We need to plan for multi-band usage. We all need to know how to change simplex frequencies, have reliable back up batteries, and gain antennas. For example a 19” vertical for 2m operation is not a gain antenna and will not provide improved performance other than being better than a rubber duck (the rubber duck being a negative gain antenna).

Basically, KNOW how to operate your radios and maximize your antenna capabilitities. The obvious need to go beyond mere ham-cram appliance operator status for all members was identified if we wish to get the job done effectively. Some degree of technical training is necessary for all KaroEcho operators.

A discussion of what simplex frequencies to choose ensued. Rob mentioned that there was an annotated list of all available simplex frequencies on the karoecho.net site. Those who do not know what frequency to go should have a copy of that list in their go-kit. Rob has a 3-ring binder with a crib sheet, op manual, maintenance logs, operational log forms, Form ICS-309, IC-213s, the KaroEcho Field Resources Operations Handbook, pencil, eraser, etc for each equipment install.

There was confusion as to assigning message precedence, message number, word count, and in general the use of the hybrid KaroEcho/ARES 213 form. Thus future training on message center operation, mapping, net operation, message handling, and portable/mobile operation would be helpful.

Natalie KM6UCF, Message Center Manager report:
Natalie did not receive a detailed job description as a message center manager at EC9 hotspot; so she had to wing it. This was due to Don's unavoidable emergency absence and hence lack of detailed instructions. Natalie reported that the GMRS/FRS and ham stations were closely co-located with the CERT ICP, information booth, resource booth, and exceedingly noisy. The situation would have been improved had there been greater isolation/ separation, as well as the judicious use of headsets, earphones, speaker mikes, and a bouncer. There were runners and scribes appointed by resources to aid the message center operation.

KM6UCF wanted to know if it was ok to reassign herself; but her question was passed over when the president decided to move on to other reports. Message center training and a more detailed message center manager job description is needed, as well as guidance on how to utilize scribes, runners, and fill out IC-309 logs. We were reminded that a NCS operational log has a quite different function than that of an ICS-309 log.

Jamuel KM6HBO: EC9 ICP ham communicator. Jamuel reported that all of his messages were destined for the EOC; but he was unable to hear the EOC on 146.415 because of their technical breakdown. More training on the hybrid message form would be useful. Equipment breakdown at the EOC considerably slowed down the entire operation tying up both EC9 and the net frequency. We need more training exercises. More inter-area messaging practice was needed

Howdy (KE6BEE) Net Control Report: More improvisation was required. Moving traffic off frequency was a challenge. NCS had to relay fills between the 146.415 surrogate EOC station and EC9 (the two main hotspots) on net frequency because NCS was the only station

who could hear the 146.415 EOC station. This slowed down the net frequency considerably. Our ability to relay traffic more efficiently was tested. Approximately 20 messages were passed both inter-area and to the EOC successfully despite the equipment breakdown at the surrogate EOC. Howdy used a J-pole (Slim Jim) roll up antenna on a fishing pole and a 25 watt go-kit with a LI-Phosphate battery located at Motorcycle Hill. His setup provided full coverage of EC and Kensington.

Mike KM6CXI: The output to the EOC from EC9 was slow. Not all messages at EC9 were sent. More parallel frequencies were needed to increase through put (packet and GMRS were suggested). The CERT Area ICs (or their designee) are to receive all incoming FRS/GMRS comms from the blocks and then filter which should go where and/or reformat them into suitable form 213s. This can be the job of the message center manager, should the CERT IC so designate. There was a ton of interest in FRS/GMRS radios. Don will follow up with another GMRS/FRS practicum in November.

Chief Kevin Janes, KI6KNP: Thought that the exercise went well. Written messages in IC-213 form are not always necessary and can slow down throughput. Use of radio logs (ICS 309) were discussed. The basic essentialities are the time/date stamp and the basic message.

Rob K6RJM: NCS of the GMRS/FRS network: Best to isolate the ham and GMRS/FRS ops from the crowds. The SAR teams went out all at once. There were 7 SAR teams plus a Triage team. Some FRS operators did not know how to operate their radios. Some had dead batteries. There was a need identified to check out their equipment before being dispatched. Some radios were only ½ watt and had minimal coverage. The FRS/GMRS system generated their own messages (over 50 messages were reported) of which some were forwarded to the EOC. Rob suggested a message center table top exercise in the future. There were two scribes (1 for FRS/GMRS and 1 for the ham radio operator). More GMRS/FRS training is needed.

Rob is orchestrating a ham radio Girl Scout demo on November 2 and a Cub Scout demo on Nov 5. Contact HYPERLINK "mailto:K6RJM@ARRL.NET" K6RJM@ARRL.NET if you can participate.

Don will hold another ham Elmer class in late October and a GMRS/FRS Elmer class in early November. Dates to be announced. We learn best from SETs and their following critiques. To view a more detailed critique see: HYPERLINK "https://drive.google.com/file/d/17hUBl_eOuhvrmL4l8vTs9rx--Jdqiqwm/view" https://drive.google.com/file/d/17hUBl_eOuhvrmL4l8vTs9rx--Jdqiqwm/view

Jay, KJ6WSS, and Karen, KK6ZPM, donated many pounds of organic apples that they grew on their farm. The meeting closed with Jay's demonstration of his 25 watt homemade portable Ham-can station-- go-kit with a Li-Ion battery (in a show and tell), USB charger, Cig. Lighter jack, etc; which generated much conversation..

Meeting was adjourned at 2130.

Transcribed by Don